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DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS TO THE COURT OF CHINA

THE KOTOW QUESTION.

I.

THROUGHOUT the East and, in fact, the world over until comparatively recent times, embassies were only sent by weaker powers to mightier ones, to crave protection, to solicit trading privileges, to ask assistance against enemies, or to bring the gifts due to a sovereign from a vassal or tributary state. This is well pointed out by La Loubère :¹ "An ambassador throughout the Orient," he says, "is nothing but a king's messenger ; he does not represent his master. The honors shown him are but slight compared to the marks of respect shown the letter of credence he bears. . . . So any man who is the bearer of a king's letter is considered an ambassador throughout the East. Thus when the Persian ambassador, whom Mons. de Chaumont left in Siam, died at Tenasserim, the servants having chosen one of their number to take to the King of Siam the letter of the King of Persia, he who was thus chosen was received without other credentials, as would have been the real ambassador, and with the same honors as previously the King of Persia had shown the ambassador of Siam.

"But that in particular in which they treat an ambassador as a simple messenger is that the King of Siam in the audience of leave gives him a receipt for the letter he has received from him ; and if this prince sends answer he does not give it to him, but sends with him his own ambassadors to carry it."

Napoleon I. professed nearly the Asiatic theory on this point when he said that "Ambassadors are not equal to, nor do they represent their sovereigns ; sovereigns have never treated them as equals. The false idea that they represent their sovereigns is a tradition of the feudal customs, under which a great vassal at the rendering of homage was represented by an ambassador who received the same honors due his master."²

¹ *Description du Royaume de Siam*, I. 327-329.

² Barry O'Meara, *Napoleon in Exile*, II. 112. Pradier Fodéré, *Cours de Droit diplomatique*, I. 272, says, "Observons toutefois que la représentation n'est pas complète, car, quelque honneur qu'on rende à un ambassadeur, on ne peut jamais le traiter comme on traiterait un souverain en personne."

It is not surprising to find that throughout the history of the intercourse of the West with the East, there should have been constant misunderstanding on the part of the Orientals as to the intention of the princes whose ambassadors they were receiving, and the duties of the envoys themselves, especially in regard to performing the prostrations prescribed by Oriental etiquette, but which for centuries past had been reserved in Europe for the divinity alone. Notwithstanding these oriental views, which must have been well known to the Western world from the earliest periods, mission to the court of the ruler of China followed mission from the thirteenth to the present century, and on nearly every occasion the envoys were slighted, to their minds at least, and their master's intentions misinterpreted. China, in fact, has only realized within the last fifty years that the old theory concerning embassies and foreign envoys was no longer tenable, in all its force, and it is only since 1873 that foreign envoys have been received as the representatives of independent sovereigns and the prostration or *ko-t'ou* before the Emperor has been dispensed with in their case. It is my purpose in the following paper to show some of the phases of this long and hard-fought battle between Oriental and Western etiquette, which is still far from being decided in some corners of the world.¹

Cornelius Nepos, referring to the visit of Themistocles to the court of Susa, says that though many Greeks had gone to the Persian court, very few had ever submitted to the ceremonials practised there. Thus when Conon was sent to Artaxerxes, he was told that unless he did homage to the King by prostrating himself before him he could not be granted an audience, and must communicate with him in writing. Conon, we are told, replied, "So far as I am personally concerned I see nothing very serious in this method of doing honor to the King, but I fear it will be a reproach to my country, if, when I am sent as an envoy by a state which is used to command others, I conduct myself after the usage of foreign nations rather than my own," and he transacted his business with the King in writing.²

A still more striking instance of courage in refusing to comply with the ceremonial of the Persian court is told by Herodotus.³ Xerxes had sent two heralds to Sparta to demand of it earth and

¹ In Morocco, for instance. In 1894, when Mr. Ernest M. Satow, H.B.M. Minister to Morocco, was accorded an audience at Fez, he stood bareheaded while addressing the Sultan, who was on horseback, and he had to treat the viziers with similar deference. Until within the last few years the French Minister has had to submit to the same humiliating etiquette. See *Imperial and Asiatic Quarterly Review*, 1895, 62.

² Corn. Nepos, *Conon*, c. III.

³ Rawlinson's trans., VII. 134-136.

water in token of its submission to the great King, but they were thrown into a well and told to take therefrom earth and water for themselves and carry it to their King. But the Spartans shortly after repented of this deed and made proclamation through the town. "Was any Lacedæmonian willing to give his life for Sparta?" Upon this two Spartans, Sperthias and Bulis, offered themselves as an atonement to Xerxes for the murder of his heralds. When they had come into the King's presence at Susa they were ordered to prostrate themselves before him. Though the guards tried to force them, yet they refused, saying that they would never do such a thing, even were their heads thrust down to the ground; it was not their custom to worship men and they had not come to Persia for that purpose.

When Alexander became King of Persia he adopted at his court the ceremonial of that country and would have himself worshipped, not only in Asia, but even in Macedonia. His claim to divinity and his demand for oriental obeisances from his subjects were met with ill-disguised scorn and anger by all Greeks and many of the foremost among them, as Callisthenes, refused to perform the, to them, humiliating prostration.¹

Among the few Greeks who visited the court of Persia and who prostrated themselves before the King we find Timagoras, who was sent on a mission to Darius and was punished with death on his return to Athens for having humbled his country by this slavish act, and Themistocles, who, when seeking a refuge at the court of Artaxerxes, saw nothing debasing in complying with the usages of the Persian court, much to the astonishment of the officer who first told him of the imperative necessity of his prostrating himself before the King.²

Though, according to certain writers, no mention is found of persons prostrating themselves on their faces before the sovereigns of early China, still I am inclined to think that this custom must have existed in some form in that country from the earliest and least civilized periods, as it certainly did in India centuries before our era. However this may be, we do not hear of any difficulties having been raised against performing the prostrations required by the ceremonial usages of the court of China by any of the foreign missions sent there from the West until the eighth century of our era, when an envoy from the Calif Walid came, about the year 713, to offer presents to the Emperor Yuan-tsung of the T'ang. He asked to be exempted from prostrating himself at the audience with

¹ Arrian, *Exp. Alex.*, IV. 10-12.

² Plutarch, *Themistocles*, XXVII.

the Emperor, saying: "In my country we only bow to God, never to a Prince." He was at once handed over to the tribunals as worthy of death for seeking to commit an unpardonable breach of the usages of the country, but the Emperor graciously pardoned him at the intercession of one of his ministers, who said that a difference in the court etiquette of foreign countries ought not to be considered a crime.¹ The envoys of Harun-el-rashid to the Emperor Tê-tsung of the T'ang, who visited China in 798, went through the ceremony, apparently without protest, and were treated with the greatest distinction and consideration.

With the spread of Mongol power in western Asia, the relation between Europe and the masters of China became quite intimate, and numerous missions were sent to China by European potentates. In 1245 Pope Innocent IV. sent two embassies to the Tartars exhorting them to embrace the Christian faith. The one under friar Ascelin went to the camp of Batu somewhere in Armenia or Persia. From the first the envoy and the Mongols misunderstood each other. They asked Ascelin if he was not aware that the great Emperor of the Mongols, their Khakhan, was the Son of Heaven, the usual Chinese name for Emperor, to which the friar undiplomatically answered "no," adding that the Pope was the highest of all human sovereigns.² This naturally irritated the Mongols, and when they asked him what presents he brought and he replied "none," they were enraged. To cap the climax, Ascelin refused to prostrate himself before Batu, and the suggestion was promptly made to flay the insolent friar, stuff his skin with straw and send it back to those who had sent him. He was, however, saved by the intercession of the wife of the chief, and ultimately sent home with two Mongol envoys bearing a letter to the Pope from the Khakhan.³

The other envoy of Innocent was Laurent of Portugal, who was sent first to Batu Khan and by him to the court of the Khakhan. This envoy was present at the election of Kuyuk Khan in August, 1246, and was granted audience by him, together with two Kings of Georgia, Ieroslav, Duke of Susdal in Russia, and a great concourse of emirs and sultans from various parts of Asia, in all some four thousand ambassadors, we are told, a noble gathering, beside which

¹ *T'ang shu*, Bk. 221, as quoted by Abel Rémusat, *Mélanges Asiatiques*, I. 441. E. Bretschneider, *On the Knowledge of Ancient Chinese of the Arabs*, etc., 8.

² This reminds us of the letter addressed by the Emperor of Japan in A. D. 600 to the Emperor Wen-ti of the Sui dynasty, which began: "The Son of Heaven of the country of the rising sun, to the Son of Heaven of the country of the setting sun." The Chinese Emperor was so indignant at this that he ordered the letters returned to the sender. See Amiot, *Mémoires concernant les Chinois*, XIV. 58.

³ Abel Rémusat, *Hist. des Relations politiques des Princes Chrétiens avec les Empereurs Mongols*, in *Mém. Acad. Inscr. et Belles Lettres*, VI. 419-427.

our modern diplomatic corps, at the largest capitals, sink into utter insignificance.

The prothonotary Chingay took down the names and titles of each of the envoys, and of the persons of their suite, also the names of those who had sent them, and these he cried out aloud before they entered the imperial tent. Then they bent their left knees four times,¹ and were searched to see that they carried no concealed weapons. After this they entered the Khakhan's presence from the east, for none but the Emperor might enter this tent coming from the west.² This was the simple ceremonial of this great audience.

This embassy was better treated than that of friar Ascelin, so far as demanding of it compliance with the ceremonial of the Mongol court was concerned, on account of the religious character of the envoys, all of whom were friars. This difference was fully recognized by the Mongols, since all monks in Asia, as in Europe at that time, were exempted from prostrating themselves before laymen.³

Two years later, in 1248, St. Louis sent friar André as his envoy to the court of Karakorum with letters to the Great Khan, and presents, among which was a "chapel in scarlet cloth," all the various ornaments for church worship and a piece of the true cross. The envoy was received with honor, but it was immediately given out that the King of France had submitted to Mongol rule and sent gifts in token of his allegiance.⁴

Although nothing was accomplished by this mission of friar André, the object of which was to exhort the Mongol princes to

¹ Marco Polo, speaking of the ceremonial at the court of Kublai, says, "And when they are all seated, each in his proper place, then a great prelate rises and says with a loud voice: 'Bow and adore!' And as soon as he has said this, the company bow down until their foreheads touch the earth in adoration towards the Emperor, as if he were a god. And this adoration they repeat four times." Yule's *Marco Polo*, 2d edit., I. 378.

² Plano Carpini, *Historia Mongalorum* (edit. Soc. Géog. Paris), 754-761.

³ Rubruk, when questioned as to the ceremonial he would follow when admitted to the Khakhan's presence, referred to this privilege of monks in Europe, and it was apparently conceded him by the Mongols. The Tao-ssu Ch'ang-ch'un, who was received in 1222 by Chinghis Khan, says, "It must be said here that the professors of the *Tao*, when presented to the Emperor, were never required to fall upon their knees or to bend their heads to the ground. On entering the imperial tent they only made a bow and placed their hands together." Bretschneider, *Chinese Medieval Travelers to the West*, p. 47. See also Du Halde, *Description de l'Empire de la Chine*, IV. 269.

⁴ Abel Rémusat, *Op. sup. cit.*, 445-449. As bearing on the subject I may mention here that Plano Carpini (*Op. sup. cit.*, 621) relates that when Michel, one of the principal chiefs of the Russians, went to give himself up a prisoner to Batu, he was first obliged to pass between two fires, to purify himself of all evil influences surrounding him, and then he was told to bow to the South to Genghis Khan. He replied that he was willing to bow before Batu and even his servants, but that he would not bow to the image of a dead man, for Christians were not allowed so to do. They repeated the order to him and he still refusing to comply with it, saying that he would rather die than do so, a guard transfixing him with his sword, and he died.

enter the Christian fold, St. Louis sent another in 1253 to Mangu Khan for the same purpose. Realizing, however, the mistake he had made in 1248 in attributing an official character to his envoy, he ordered the head of the mission, the Flemish Franciscan friar, William Ruysbroek, or Rubruk, to conceal carefully his true character, and to represent himself only in that of an itinerant preaching friar. The story of his audience with Mangu Khan, whom he found not far from his capital of Karakorum, as told by himself in his *Itinerarium*, is worth quoting.

"We were asked what reverence we would pay the Chan, whether after our own fashion or theirs. To which I made answer: 'We are priests dedicated to the service of God. Noblemen in our own country will not suffer priests to bow their knees before them, for the honor of God. Nevertheless we will humble ourselves to all men for the Lord's sake. We came from a far country, so if it please ye, we will first sing praises unto God, who hath brought us safe hither from afar, and afterwards we will do whatsoever pleaseth your Lord, with this exception, that he command nothing of us which may be against the worship and honor of God.'

"They then entered into the house and delivered what I had said. And it pleased the Lord, and they set us before the entrance of the house, lifting up the felt which hung before the door, and because it was Christmas we began to sing: 'A solis ortus cardine,' etc.

"And when we had sung this hymn they searched us to see we had no knives about us. They made our interpreter ungird himself and leave his girdle and his knife without, in the custody of a doorkeeper. Then we entered, and there stood in the entrance a bench with cosmos (*kumiss*) on it, beside which they made our interpreter stand, and carried us to sit upon a form before the ladies. The whole house was hung with cloth of gold, and on a hearth, in the middle of the house, there was a fire made of thorns and wormwood roots (which grow there very big) and ox-dung. The Chan sat upon a bed covered with a spotted skin, or fur, bright and shining like a seal's skin (*bos marinus*). He was a flat-nosed man, of middle stature, about the age of five and forty, and a little young woman, his wife, sat by him, and one of his daughters, whose name was Cirina, a hard-favored young woman, with other children that were younger, sat next unto them upon a bed.

"He commanded drink of rice to be given us, clear and good as white wine; whereof I tasted a little for reverence of him, and our interpreter, to our misfortune, stood by the butlers who gave him much drink, so that he was quickly drunk. . . . After a long time he commanded us to speak. We were then to bow the knee." Then Rubruk disclosed the object of his coming and the Khan made a short bombastic answer. "Hitherto," adds friar William, "I understood my interpreter, but further I could not perceive any perfect sentence, whereby I easily found he was drunk, and Mangu Chan himself was drunk too, at least I thought so."¹

The next embassy of which we hear as having refused to comply with the ceremonial in force at the Mongol court was that sent

¹ Rubruk, *Itinerarium* (edit. Soc. Géog. Paris), 304-308.

by Philip the Fair of France in 1288 to Argun, the Mongol ruler of Persia. The names of the ambassadors have not reached us, but we are told of them that they behaved with great arrogance. They refused to render the King of Persia the homage expected of them, because he was not a Christian. They would be remiss in their duty to their Master, they said, if they consented to prostrate themselves before the king, as he three times asked them to do. Argun, however, finally received them and treated them even with great courtesy. The next year, however, his ambassador to Pope Nicholas IV. called the attention of the King of France, in a most diplomatic way, to this unseemly conduct on the part of his envoys. If the King of France had directed his ambassadors to conduct themselves in the way they had done with Argun, he was content, "for what pleases you pleases him." If, however, the King should send back these envoys or others, he begged Philip to allow and direct them to make the King of Persia such reverence and honor as is customary and in usage at his court. In consideration of this they would be dispensed with passing through fire,¹ a Tartar custom by which all new comers at court, be they princes or envoys, together with all the presents they brought with them were obliged to pass between two big fires; by so doing, all evil influences or ill luck which they bore with them were driven away. This was the first diplomatic victory of the West over the East and the last one recorded for many centuries to come.

Though the next mission of interest to us to the Chinese court was not one from a European power, it is nevertheless well worth noticing, as it presents the earliest account at present accessible of the ceremonies attending the reception of foreign envoys, and shows that already in the fifteenth century the etiquette at the court of the Emperor of China was practically the same as at the present day.

In 1419 Shah Rukh,² the son of Tamerlane, sent an embassy from Herat to the court of the Emperor Yung-lo of the Ming. It was joined on the way by envoys from Samarkand, Badakshan and other countries, and together they traveled to Peking, in company of some returning Chinese envoys, arriving in the Chinese capital in 1420. They reached the city during the night and, the gates being

¹ Abel Rémusat, *Op. sup. cit.*, 361-378. On this custom see Plano Carpini, *Op. sup. cit.*, 625, 627, also D'Ohsson, *Hist. des Mongols*, II. 210. It is still observed in shamanistic ceremonies in parts of Siberia. See Prof. V. M. Mikhailov in *Journ. Anthropol. Inst.*, XXIV. 89.

² Thévenot, *Relations de divers Voyages curieux*, II. See also Étienne Quatremère, *Notices et Extraits*, XIV., pt. I., 387 et seq., and H. Yule, *Cathay and the Way thither*, I., cxix. et seq. On the palace of Peking in the Yuan and Ming periods, see Bretschneider, *Archæological and Historical Researches in Peking*, etc., 23 et seq.

shut, they were led in unceremoniously through a breach in the wall, which was being repaired, and conducted directly to the palace. They stopped for a while before a pavilion in a great court and here they passed the remainder of the night with a vast number of soldiers—300,000, the chronicler says with true Oriental imagery—while two thousand musicians and singers sang prayers for the Emperor's prosperity, and two thousand more men, with sticks and halberds, kept back the vast crowd of lookers on.

As day broke there arose a great sound of music, and the doors in the pavilion which led into the inner court, at the upper end of which was the audience hall, were thrown open.

“The ambassadors having passed from the first place to the second found the latter as beautiful and as spacious as the other. In the upper part there was a kiosk or pavilion larger than the first, where had been erected a platform, or sofa, of triangular form. It was four cubits high and covered with yellow satin, with gildings and paintings representing the Simorg or Phoenix, which the Khataians call the ‘Royal Bird.’ On this throne or sofa was a seat of massive gold, and to the right and left there were Khataians standing and arranged in great numbers. The first were those who commanded ten thousand men, followed by those who commanded a thousand, and after them those who only commanded a hundred; each holding in his right hand a tablet, a cubit long and quarter of a cubit broad, and looking at nothing else but their tablets. Behind them was an incalculable multitude of soldiers armed with cuirasses and lances and several with naked swords in their hands; all of them standing in their ranks and in such great silence that one would have said there was not a living soul there. Things being in this state, the Emperor¹ came out of his apartment and ascended the throne, by five silver steps which had been placed there, and sat down on this seat of gold. He was of medium height; his beard was neither too thick nor too thin, and two or three hundred hairs hung down from his chin to such a great length that they formed three or four curls on his stomach. To the right and left of the throne stood two girls of great beauty; their hair fixed on the top of their heads; their faces and necks uncovered, and great pearls in their ears. They held pen and paper in their hands and paid great attention to write down what the Emperor said. (They put down in writing all of his words, which are shown to him when he has gone back to his apartments, to see if there is anything to be changed in his various commands. Then they carry them out to the people of the Divan to the end that they may be executed.) Finally, when he had taken his place and all had been arranged, they caused the ambassadors to advance before the Emperor with some criminals. The first business which was disposed of was that of the criminals,² who were to the number of seven hundred. Some of them were fastened by the neck; others had their heads and necks passed through a board; five or six were all fastened together to a single board, in which their heads were fixed. Each one had a guard who held him by the hair of his head, waiting the order of the Emperor.

¹ Yung-lo of the Ming, who reigned from 1403 to 1425.

² This is a delightful bit of Chinese humor, such as they love to indulge in at the expense of foreign barbarians.

He had the greater part of them put in prison. There were but few condemned to death.

"The ambassadors were conducted near the throne to about fifteen cubits from it, and the officer who conducted them, having kneeled, read a paper in Khataian which set forth that which regarded the ambassadors, to wit: that they were ambassadors who had come from afar, from Shah Rukh and his children; that they had brought rare objects to be presented to the Emperor, and that they had come to strike their heads against the ground before his Majesty. Then the Cadi Mulana Hagi Jusuf, one of the officers who commanded ten thousand men, a favorite of the Sultan, and one of his Council, approached the ambassadors together with some Musulmen who understood the language, and told them first to kneel and to put their heads against the ground. The ambassadors bowed their heads three times, but they did not touch the ground with their foreheads. This being done, the ambassadors took in both hands the letters of Shah Rukh, of Prince Baisangar and of the other princes and emirs, enveloped in yellow satin, according to the custom of the Khataians, who envelop in this color everything that is destined for the Emperor. The Cadi Mulana Jusuf took the letters from their hands and placed them in those of the Khogia of the Palace, who sat at the foot of the throne. This Khogia presented them to the Emperor who took them, opened and looked over them, and gave them back to the Khogia. After this he came down from his throne and sat at the foot of it on a seat, and at the same time there were brought him three thousand cloaks of fine stuff and two thousand others of coarse stuff, with which his children and those of his house were clothed. The seven ambassadors approached him and knelt, and the Emperor asked them concerning the health of Shah Rukh, etc., etc.

"After various questions about the products of their country and the condition of the roads between China and Persia, the Emperor said: 'You have come from afar, arise and go and eat.' Then the ambassadors were led into the first court, where there was set a table for each one . . . after which, they were led to the lodgings where they were to sleep. The upper room was furnished with a bed, consisting of a raised seat covered with very beautiful silk cushions, with a brazier in which to make fire; and on the right and left there were other rooms with beds, silk cushions, rugs and very fine mats. Each one of the ambassadors was lodged in this manner in a separate room, where they each had a kettle, a plate, a spoon and a table. They received each day, for ten persons, a sheep, a goose, two chickens; and each person two measures of flour and a large plateful of rice, two large bowls full of sweetmeats, a pot of honey, some garlic, onions, salt, different kinds of herbs, a bowl of *Dirapum* and a bowl of dried fruits; some nuts, hazel, chestnut, etc. There were also a number of fine-looking servants who remained always standing, ready to serve them from morning until evening."

The next mission to which I shall refer is that sent in 1654 by the Czar Alexis of Russia under the leadership of Feodor Iskowitz Backhoff.¹ Backhoff appears to have entered China by way of Kuei-

¹In Thévenot's *Relations*, Vol. II., the Latin text of this narrative is given. The English text is in Churchill's *Collection of Voyages and Travels*, II. 471-473. Thévenot's text is probably the more correct. I have quoted, however, from the English translation, and retained its quaint phraseology.

hua Ch'eng or Koko Khutun (his Cokatana). He reached Peking, or Cambalu as he called it, on March 3, 1656, four months before the arrival of the mission sent there by the Company of the Dutch East Indies.

"About an English mile out of town," he says, "we were met by two deputies, one whereof was the chancellor of the office of the foreign affairs, the other of that of the Chinese affairs. They received us in a spacious structure of stone, inhabited by some priests, and built, as we were told, for the reception of the *Delac Lama* or the *Tartarian* high-priest, who is revered among them like a god.¹ At the entrance of this house they desired me to alight from my horse, and pay my respects to the king² upon my knees. Unto which I replied that it was not our custom to salute even our *Czar* upon our knees, but only with a very low bow, and bare-headed; unto which they gave no other answer, but that the *Dutch* never refused it, and therefore I ought not. They then presented me with some *Thee*, made with cow's milk, and butter, in the king's name; it being Lent, I refused to drink it. They told me, that I being sent from one great *Czar* to another mighty prince, I ought at least to accept it, which I did, and so turned back. As we were making our entry, I saw in the gate standing three brass cannon, and so we marched forward for three *versts*, most thro' markets, before we came to the court prepared for our reception, which had two houses of stone, hung with tapestry. Our daily allowance of provisions was one sheep and a small cask of *Spanish* brandy, two fishes, a middle-sized *Jafy*, a certain quantity of wheat flour, *Sichay*,³ and rice, and two cups of brandy.

"The 6th of *March*, word was sent me to bring my credentials to the secretary's office; which I refused to comply with, telling the messenger that I was sent with these credentials to the king, and not to his ministers.

"*August 21*, they sent again upon the same errand; but I refused the same, they told me, that since I had disobeyed their king's command, they had orders to punish me; I gave them no other answer, but, if they cut me limb by limb, I would not part with them till I had been admitted to the King's presence."⁴

The 31st of August, all of the presents for the Emperor, which had a few days before been taken from Backhoff by force, were brought back by special command from their king, "because I had refused to deliver my credentials into the secretary's office; and one among them told me, '*No foreign minister, come he from what*

¹ At this time the tribute missions sent by the Talé lama of Tibet stopped probably in the Pai-ta ssü or the Sung-chu ssü; the Huang ssü outside the city on the north side was not then built, I believe.

² By this he means to prostrate himself before an imperial chair, or, as required of Count Golovkin in 1805, before a table covered with yellow silk and supposed to represent the person of the Emperor.

³ I am unable to say what Chinese words *Jafy* represents; *Sichay* is probably *hsi ch'a*, "fine tea."

⁴ Comp. with this the fuller Latin text in Thévenot's collection, II., *Ambassade de Schakrock*, 14, 15.

country he will, is admitted into the presence of our king, but only of his great ministers, call'd Inoanol Boyarde.'"¹

Backhoff remained shut up in an official inn or *kung-kuan* (probably one of those situated behind the present United States Legation, and still used to lodge tribute-bearers of the Nepalese, Lo-los and Tibetan tribes from the borders of Western China), unable to see anything or anybody until September, when he left again for Russia.

In July of the same year a Dutch embassy arrived in Peking from Canton, having traveled overland from that port. It was sent by the Dutch East India Company to secure trading privileges at Canton. The envoys were received by a few officials of low rank and lodged not far from where Backhoff was confined. Their names, the presents they bore, and every other imaginable detail concerning them were carefully written down, and a guard of soldiers stationed over them, ostensibly to protect them and the gifts destined for the Emperor. The Chinese officials inquired particularly whether the ambassadors were related to the Prince of Orange, for unless they were they could not hope to be received by the Emperor. Thus, they said, the late envoys from Korea and the Liu-chiu Islands were, the former a brother of the king, the latter his son-in-law. This same argument, which had recently been also used with Backhoff, had apparently no other object than to make the envoys realize all the honor the Emperor was about to do them and how friendly were his sentiments, when he should finally admit them to an audience. Should, happily, the envoys be princes or personages of exalted station, the Emperor's greatness would thereby be magnified, if such a thing were possible, in the eyes of his people. So great has been the wish of the Chinese to exalt their sovereign above all others that they have often resorted to the most extraordinary expedients, if we may believe travellers, to demonstrate his preëminence in the eyes of the public. Thus Bernardine of Escalanta,² speaking of the missions which the Kings of Ava, Siam and other Asiatic countries sent to the court of China, says: "They always send with the embassy four or five persons, everyone with like authority, that if it happens some of them to die on the way, or until they be despatched from thence, and they die not of any disease, they (the Chinese) always poison one or two of them in some banquet, unto whom they make very sumptuous

¹ *Inoanol* is not Russian, neither is it Chinese. *Inoanol Boyarde* is presumably a member of the Privy Council (*Nei ko*).

² *Account of the Empire of China*. In Osborne's *Collections of Voyages and Travels*, II. 57.

sepulchres, with epitaphs concerning what they were, and the cause of their coming, and by what prince they were sent. And this is for to continue the memory and greatness of the renown of his realm."

But to come back to the Dutch Embassy, the Jesuits, who were at that time very powerful at the court of Peking, exerted themselves to defeat the mission, and as one of the fathers tells us¹ "they resolved to leave no medium unessayed to overthrow these Hollanders' designs, and with all diligence and vigilancy to vacuate their undertakings, and they searched after all means possible to hinder their access to the Court."

The good fathers were embarrassed by lack of ready money with which to further their worthy purposes, for the Dutch appear to have been lavish with their presents. Thus Father John Adam writes :

"Certain it is that three thousand Tayes (*taels*) were sufficient to make a present to the Emperor, more acceptable than all the Dutch have brought, thereby to confirm the Emperor's favour to us, and interclude all ways to these Hereticks; but we are at too great a distance from Macao to acquaint them [*i. e.*, the head of their mission] with these passages, and probably we might not be heard; nevertheless, I assure your reverend Fatherhood, that as far as my power will extend, I will not spare art nor labour to paint out these Hollanders in true and native colours. . . . Our God who suffered them to enter Japan, so much to the destruction of Christianity, which before flourished in that island, would not permit their ingress into China, to the like damage of Religion here."

Notwithstanding the Jesuits' efforts it was finally decided to receive the embassy.

"The Emperor having been informed concerning Holland sent a declaration to his Council stating that he would receive the Dutch as ambassadors, and gave orders to conduct them to the audience when he should be seated on his throne in his new palace. . . .²

"The time was, however, approaching when the Emperor was to make his first entry into his new palace, to which time he had put off their audience, but the custom of the country obliged them first to go to make their obedience (*Soumissions*) in the Palace where is kept the seal of the kingdom, for this place, having been chosen by Heaven and therefore sanctified in all times, foreign ambassadors, they say, owe it the first honors, and they are never received in audience except after having been there. This law is general for all those who have audience with the Emperor or who enter upon any functions, even the Emperor himself is not exempted, and before he becomes Emperor he must needs come and bow his head, and make obedience in this place."

¹ *Narrative of the Success of an Embassy unto the Emperour of China and Tartary*, in John Ogilby's edition of Nieuhoff's *Embassy*.

² Conf. John Ogilby's English translation (1669), 119-135, which is not as full, however, as the French translation in Thévenot, II. 53-59.

The ambassadors complied with this custom on the 14th of August, three days before that fixed for the audience. They were led by a number of officials in full court dress into a little chapel in the old palace and then—"a quarter of an hour after, they were led into a court and placed in front of the old throne, shut in all about by a paling, and a herald cried out to them with a strong voice *Kuschan*, that is to say, 'God hath sent the Emperor,' after which he cried to them *Quéé*, that is to say, 'kneel down;' *Kanto*, which signifieth 'bow the head three times;' *Kée*, 'arise;' which he repeated three times; and finally he cried *Koce*, that is to say, 'stand to one side.'¹ This took place in presence of a quantity of Chinese doctors," after which the envoys returned to their lodgings to wait for the 25th of August, on which day their audience with the Emperor was to take place.

The death of the brother of the Emperor put off the audience until the 2d of October (1656), when the same officials who had accompanied them when they had performed their prostrations before the imperial throne came for them at two o'clock in the morning. Six persons of the envoys' suite accompanied them. They were led into the second court of the palace where they waited, seated on "blue stones" and in an open court, until day-break. Ambassadors of the Great Mogul were placed next to them, also deputations of lamas and of the Sudatses² waited to be introduced with them. After a while they were led into the part of the palace where the Emperor had his throne and which they found filled with officers and soldiers, gorgeously dressed and carrying different colored standards, images of the sun and moon, parasols and poles with tassels of gold and silk of different colors hanging from them. At the foot of the throne they particularly noticed "six horses as white as snow, with bridles studded with rubies and pearls." Suddenly, while they were considering all this magnificence, "they heard a little bell tinkle and a soldier appeared, cracking a leather thong, so that with each crack of it they heard three pistol shots." On hearing this everyone stood up, and at the same time was heard "an agreeable music of various instruments and very sweet voices." The various high officers and the envoys of the

¹*Kuschan* is perhaps *chü*, "go," and *chan*, "stand up." *Quéé* is *kuei*, "kneel." *Kanto* is probably *k'o*, "bump," *t'ou*, "the head." *Kée* is *ch'i*, "rise up," and *Koce* is perhaps *k'o*, "it is proper," *chü*, "to go away."

²Or Sudasen, which the editor says are Yupi ("Fishskin") Tartars. Ogilby says they are "South Tartars" and gives a description of their dress. (Nieuhoff, *Op. cit.*, 123.) He writes their name Zutadsen and Suytadsen. This is the vulgar expression, still in general use, *Sao Ta tzu* "Stinking Tartars," applied by the northern Chinese to all Mongols alike.

Great Mogul, the lamas and others, kotowed at the foot of the throne, and then the chancellor of the kingdom came to the ambassadors of Holland and asked them their titles. They answered that they had that of Tchiomping,¹ "agreeably to the judgment of the King of Canton, who had given them this title." The ambassadors of the Mogul having answered that they had the same title as the Dutch, they were placed side by side.

"In the middle of this hall there were twenty stones with copper plates on which are marked the titles of those who are to kneel. The ambassadors were placed on the tenth stone where they stood until a herald cried, "*Advance toward the throne.*" At these words they all rose to advance. Then the herald said, "*Return to your places,*" which they did at once. "Bow your head three times to the ground," and finally, "arise." They were obliged three times to go through all these exercises. The herald cried, "*Return to your place,*" when they walked at once to the left side of the hall and took their former places."

After this they were led into another raised hall or stage with the ambassadors of the Great Mogul, and were again obliged to go on their knees and bow three times to the ground, when they were served with tea, mixed with milk, which was given them in little wooden bowls. Meanwhile the noise of bells was heard and the cracking of the leather strap, and they all went again on their knees, when the Emperor finally appeared at about thirty steps from the ambassadors on a throne of gold, with two arms in the shape of great dragons which concealed him so that they could only see a part of his face. Two viceroys of the royal blood were seated below him, and after them three great lords of his court. They were drinking tea in little wooden vessels, and were all dressed in blue silk of the same color, on which were representations of serpents and dragons. Their caps had a little gold ball on the top enriched with jewels.

The Emperor never addressed a word to the ambassadors, and, "after a quarter of an hour," Nieuhoff remarks, he rose and left the hall. We are told by the ambassador that the Emperor² was a young man, fair of face, of medium height and well proportioned. As soon as he had left the audience hall all restraint seems to have vanished, and the soldiers and other people in the palace rushed in to look and gaze at the Dutch "as if they had been some strange Africk monsters."

¹Or, according to our mode of transcription, *Tsung-ping*, "General." In Father John Adam's *Narrative of the Success of the Embassy*, etc., it is said the two ambassadors were called by the Tartars *Compim* or "Captain."

²This emperor is known as Shun-chih. He reigned from 1644 to 1662. He was the first emperor of the present Manchu or Ta ching dynasty who reigned in China proper.

The same day on which they were received by the Emperor they were given a dinner by the first minister¹ together with the other envoys who had been received at the same time as they. This feast was served by order of the Emperor. Before sitting down at the table they all turned toward the north, "because the Emperor abides in that direction," and made three reverences, as they had before done in front of the throne. Among the queer dishes which were served on this occasion was camel's flesh, roasted and boiled, probably for the special delectation of the Mongol guests and of the Emperor's *maitre d'hôtel*, who devoured it "like a man who might have been fasting for the three last days." When they had finished eating the Chinese obliged the ambassadors to put all the bits left over into bags to carry back with them to their lodgings, "and it was a pleasure to see these famished Tartars filling their leather pouches or skins with the hair still on." After eating they were served with drink, consisting of *sampsœ*,² brought in jugs, from which it was poured into bowls and ladled out with wooden spoons into pots of gold and silver. They were told that this drink was distilled from sweet milk.

At the end of the banquet the envoys were required to make another obedience in the direction of the palace of the Emperor to thank him for this "brave high treatment," after which the narrator pathetically says: "They went away without other compliments or ceremony, very much worn out by the different reverences which they had been obliged to make that day." On various subsequent occasions they had again to perform these prostrations.

Finally, after two more banquets, where they remarked that the Mogul envoys and the other foreigners were better treated than they, the Li pu handed them a letter to the Governor-General of Batavia, and told them to leave the city at once, which they did two hours after its receipt. They were unable during their stay in Peking to visit the city, as they were kept all the time shut up in their lodgings "like recluses in their cells," without being allowed to go out once, except to court or to the Board of Rites. Every day they were furnished by order of the Emperor with the following: To the ambassadors six catties of meat, a goose, two chickens, four pots of *sampsœ*, two teils (ounces) of salt, two teils of tea of Tartary³ and a

¹ According to Ogilby's translation (p. 130) the feast took place at the Board of Rites (Li pu). Father Adam, *Narrative*, etc., f. 13, calls the president of this board "a sordid and covetous wretch."

² Or *samshu*, as it is called in Anglo-Chinese. It is usually made from sorghum in northern China, but in the south from rice. Its Chinese name is *shao chiu* or "brandy-wine." A kind of brandy is made by the Mongols from mare's milk and is called *arreki*. See my *Land of the Lamas*, pp. 130 and 248.

³ Probably coarse brick tea, such as the Mongols use.

teil two maes (an ounce and a half) of oil, while the secretary received two catties of fresh meat, half an ounce of tea, a cattie of honey, a cattie of tanta,¹ five coudria four maes of oil, four teils of missou, etc. Among the supplies given the suite of the embassy, I notice rice which, however, was not allowed the higher officers.

As to the object of their mission they gained a partial success, for permission was granted the Dutch to visit Canton for trade once in eight years, with not over one hundred men in a company, of whom twenty might proceed to Peking with the presents destined for the Emperor.²

WILLIAM WOODVILLE ROCKHILL.

(*To be Continued.*)

¹ Ogilby says (p. 134), Taufoe, which represents the Chinese *tou fu*, "bean curd," a very common article of Chinese diet. Missou or misson is Chinese *mi su*, "soy sauce."

² Although the Dutch admit that they performed all the ceremonies prescribed by Chinese court etiquette, the Jesuit Father Baliou, writing *after* the departure of the mission, says "The Hollanders may not come into the King's presence (nor the Muscovites), because they will not submit themselves to those ceremonies of reverence accustomed in this Palace. They are novices, and ignorant in affairs and obstinate in refusing to accommodate themselves to the customs of the country. God will at length discover his mercies to the Catholick Portugueses here!" *Embassage to the Emperour of China*, etc., 47.